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Boston Young Men's Christian Union

SOME WORLD-ASPECTS OF THE TEMPERANCE QUESTION

OBSERVATIONS IN ENGLAND, FRANCE, GERMANY, AFRICA, AND INDIA

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THE UNITARIAN TEMPERANCE SOCIETY.

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I give and bequeath to The Unitarian Temperance Society, of Boston, Mass., the sum of ..... dollars, for the use of said society.

Boston Ministerial Union.
September 11, 1899

ENGLAND.

Let us go first to England. I confess that seldom in my life have I been so appalled as by my first month in London. Perhaps there are not many more drinking-places in London in proportion to the population than in New York or Chicago. But at least they seemed to me more obtrusive; and there was manifested in connection with them, both by patrons and managers, much less of a sense of shame. Three things especially surprised and shocked me. One was the tremendously high pressure at which they were all running on Sunday, particularly Sunday evening. The second was the general practice of having girls and young women, the prettiest and most attractive to be found, to deal out the drinks. And the third was the large proportion of women among the customers. Again and again I took long walks on Sunday evenings, at nine, ten, and eleven o'clock, through all kinds of streets, from the most rich and fashionable to the most poor and shabby; and everywhere I found the drinking-places full to overflowing, and nearly half the drinkers were women. I wondered if London was exceptional in England. Probably it is slightly so; and yet, when I came later to visit other large cities, I found a closely similar condition of things. As regards Sunday-closing, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland are all in advance of England. Scotland has had such closing since 1854, Ireland (except in five large towns) since 1878, and Wales since 1881. Repeated attempts have been made to extend this reform to England, but without success; though, wherever popular votes have been taken, there have generally been majorities in favor of Sunday-closing. It is encouraging to see that a movement is now on foot, with Dr. Temple, the new Archbishop of Canterbury, at its head, to get an "Imperial Sunday-closing Bill for England" passed by Parliament.

Five months' observations in different parts of England convinced me that the drink evil there is somewhat more

serious than in this country. At least, we are better off in certain particulars. For one thing, woman is not so deeply degraded by it here. That is much. For another, I think we have a little more help from religion. The non-conforming churches in England seem to stand about with the same churches here. A majority of their laymen and a very considerable majority of their ministers are temperance men. Unfortunately, not so much can be said of the Establishment. In that Church, which exerts such an enormous influence for good or for evil, while an important section favors temperance, and furnishes some very strong temperance workers, it is generally conceded that a majority of the clergy and the laity give their influence in favor of drinking practices, though of course claiming to counsel moderation.

Everywhere I was told that the last general election in England, which put Salisbury and the Tories in power, was carried by the union of the liquor element, the landlord element, and the Established Church. They told me, too, to my surprise, that the cathedral towns, where, of course, the State Church is particularly strong and its clergy particularly numerous and influential, are the worst liquor strongholds in the kingdom, and the hardest to be affected by any kind of temperance movement. Of course, this is as discouraging as it is shocking. If the Christian Church, and especially if its spiritual teachers and leaders, cannot be relied on in the battle with the worst evil that burdens and curses humanity, what is the Church for?

It is agreed that the House of Lords is an obstacle in the way of temperance reform, as it is in the way of most progressive movements. The present Parliament is understood to be a liquor Parliament, though a number of able temperance men have seats in it. That the government should be in such hands is unfortunate. It is unfortunate for England, but it is still more unfortunate for many lands which England rules.

AFRICA.

Great havoc is being wrought by liquor in Africa. Who are responsible? Several of the nations of Continental Europe, most prominent of which are Germany, France, Italy, and Holland. Nor is our own country clear, by any means. But the heaviest responsibility rests upon Great Britain. As Englishmen themselves are pointing out with indignant shame, their country, their proud Britain, which in the beginning of this century led in the noble movement for abolishing African slavery at great cost to herself, in the last quarter of the same century has stooped so low as to identify herself with, and practically to put herself at the head of, a so-called commercial movement which has brought to large sections of the Dark Continent conditions even worse, if possible, than those of slavery. Nearly everywhere the native races brought into contact with Europeans are decaying. Instead of being elevated, they are being corrupted and destroyed. Investigations have been made again and again as to the causes. Always the answer is the same. The causes are vices introduced by Europeans, the most widely spreading and destructive of which is the drink habit. Christian missionaries, and, in some sections, Mohammedan missionaries, are doing what they can to stay the evil. But all their efforts seem like attempts to sweep back the tide of the sea with brooms, so long as traders are allowed to bring liquor in and sell it to the native peoples.

There is a region above the seventh parallel of north latitude in which prohibition has been put in force, with the consent of the British government, and with excellent results. There are also several territories of larger or smaller extent in the south-west and south-east, where prohibition has been decreed, generally by native rulers. The effects there, too, are most salutary. But nearly all parts of Africa are open to the liquor traffic, with no check except that of an excise tax to Great Britain or to whichever other one of the European governments has control. Says Sir

Richard Burton, the distinguished African traveller, "It is my sincere belief that, if the slave-trade were revived with all its horrors, and Africa could get rid of the white man, with the gunpowder and rum which he has introduced, Africa would be a gainer by the exchange." England, being a strong, a civilized, and a Christian power, ought to protect the weaker peoples that come under her rule. But, instead of that, Sir Charles Warren, after a long experience in Africa, says, "It is an absolute fact that by our laws we force on the territories of the native peoples the drink which was disallowed under their own laws." Maliki, the Mohammedan emir of Nupe on the Niger, wrote to Bishop Crowther in 1884: "Rum has ruined my country, it has ruined my people. Beg the British queen to prevent the bringing of rum into the land." Again and again King Khama has appealed to the British government to be allowed to protect his people against the destruction which drink was bringing upon them. "I dread the white man's drink," he says, "more than all the Matabele, who kill men's bodies, and it is quickly over; but drink puts devils into men, and destroys both their souls and their bodies." Sir George Goldie, founder and governor of the Royal Niger Company in West Africa, said in a speech at Grosvenor House, London, in May, 1895: "I speak from sixteen years' experience; and I say confidently that, unless immediate steps are taken to stop this traffic,— not by higher duties, but by absolute prohibition,— a state of things will soon be brought about that must ultimately lead to the entire abandonment of the country. . . . I cannot believe that the conscience of Europe will long allow that the vast populous regions of tropical Africa should be used only as a cesspool of European alcohol."

As has already been said, the sole blame for this state of things does not rest upon England. Much belongs to other European governments, and some to America. But the heaviest responsibility should justly be charged upon the British government, because that government has the largest

interests in Africa, and is in a condition to afford more protection to the African peoples than any other European power can give.

OTHER LANDS.

Nor does England's responsibility for the liquor traffic stop with Africa. The English are the great maritime, the great exploring and colonizing and trading people of the world; and, wherever they have gone, they have carried the same deadly liquor traffic. As the New York *Tribune* has recently pointed out, there is scarcely an island in the great archipelagoes, in the Malay, Papuan, Melanesian, or Micronesian groups, where English drink has not debauched native life. From Australia to Calcutta, from Hong Kong to the Falkland Islands, from Mauritius to Ceylon, that nation, which claims to stand in the van of Christian progress and enlightenment, has carried and taught the use of the deadliest poison invented by man. Nor is there, in the prosecution of this nefarious traffic, even the faintest pretence of consideration for those who suffer. Protests, petitions, remonstrances, delegations sent to England to carry the prayers of the unhappy peoples concerned, have been, in nearly all cases, unheeded and in vain.

Such facts as these help us to see to what extent the temperance question in England is a world-matter. They help us to understand how deeply unfortunate, not only for England, but for millions of human beings in lands far remote, is the election of a liquor Parliament in London.

ENGLAND AGAIN.

Are there any signs of improvement for England in temperance matters?

I wish I were able to answer this question more encouragingly. And yet the prospects do not seem to be all dark. I think there are signs of improvement. Certainly, I found men in many different parts of England who believe

that there are. Every year there seems to be increasing attention called to the evils of drink,—its evils both in England and in her dependencies. Temperance societies are growing steadily stronger and more numerous in England. One vigorous society has recently been formed for the express purpose of waking up the churches. Temperance literature is increasing fast, and is being circulated everywhere. Drinking customs are still bad enough, but everybody agrees that they are changing for the better. Such customs as those portrayed by Charles Dickens are gone, not to return. Statesmen are slowly waking up to see what a burden strong drink is to the kingdom, as a destroyer of wealth and a crippler of industry, and what a menace as a corrupter of politics and a producer of crime. Military men are beginning to see that drink is a great weakener of the army. It is found that total abstainers stand the severest campaigns where even moderate drinkers break down. Medical men are more and more recognizing the serious effects of drink upon the health of the people. Laboring men are learning to see in it a foe to industry. Children are receiving temperance teaching, three millions of the children of England being already enrolled in Temperance Bands of Hope. The Church is opening its eyes to see that religion is recreant to both God and man, if it does not throw itself earnestly into the temperance cause, since with that cause nearly every interest of humanity is bound up. Last, but not least, there seem to be some signs that a public conscience is growing slowly — far too slowly, yet steadily and surely — regarding the nation's sin against Africa and the Islands of the Sea and India, and all the weaker peoples that are under her sway.

Such are some of the indications that, notwithstanding all the darkness in England as regards temperance matters, there is yet light in the sky.

evil customs which they will learn to imitate than good from any knowledge they will be able to gain.

Upon still another matter I think our study throws light. There are persons who tell us that wine and beer are temperance drinks, and who urge that America ought to follow the example of Germany and France, and introduce them everywhere as the true way to promote temperance. It is true there are many persons in France and Germany and other lands who use wine and beer all their lives without ever becoming drunkards or exceeding the bounds of moderation, and without ever passing on to the use of stronger liquors. But I think the facts which have been presented in this paper ought to convince any candid mind that there is no safety in wine or beer; that many of the worst evils that spring from drinking come from the use of wine and beer; that everywhere the tendency of their use is to create an appetite and a demand for stronger liquors; and that the claim that wine and beer are temperance drinks, and that their use is to be advocated in the interest of temperance, finds no support in the condition of things existing in France and Germany to-day, and has no discoverable basis to stand upon.

INDIA.

I pass now to a brief study of the temperance situation in India.

CONDITION OF THINGS BEFORE THE COMING OF THE EUROPEANS.

When Europeans first went to India, they found all parts of that vast and interesting land occupied by singularly sober peoples. All the leading religions of India may be spoken of as inculcators of temperance principles and practices. The least so is Hinduism. In the earliest Hindu sacred books, the Vedas, there is evidence of some indulgence in intoxicants in connection with religious usages. And there are to-day in India certain Hindu sects among

whom the same license is allowed. But very early leading Hindu religious teachers saw the evils of strong drink, and arrayed themselves against it. Manu and other great lawgivers, if they did not absolutely forbid its use, at least hedged its use about with very severe restrictions, which have been effective in keeping the Hindu peoples throughout their history in a high degree temperate, and, for the most part, total abstainers.

When Buddhism came upon the scene, it went still farther and wholly prohibited the use of intoxicants. Buddhism has five great commandments, corresponding in a measure to our Old Testament Ten Commandments. The five Buddhist commands are: —

"1. Thou shalt not take life.
"2. Thou shalt not lie.
"3. Thou shalt not steal.
"4. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
"5. Thou shalt not drink strong drink."

How much different would have been the history of Christianity if our Bible had contained the last of these commands! Buddhism seems to have been the world's first great organized prohibition movement.

When, more than a thousand years later, Mohammedanism entered India, it was with a message in harmony with that of Buddha, so far as temperance was concerned. The word of the Arabian prophet was: Intoxicants are a delusion and a snare. Their effects are evil, and only evil. Let the faithful wholly avoid them. It must be confessed that Mohammedan rulers have often broken this command, as also they have many others. But, on the whole, the followers of the crescent in India, now numbering 55,000,000, have tried to carry out the injunction of their prophet in the matter of abstaining from all intoxicating liquors. Probably I should be safe in saying that for the past thousand years the world's most active and powerful temperance society has been the Mohammedan Church.

EFFECTS OF THE PRESENCE OF EUROPEANS IN INDIA.

What has been the effect upon the Indian peoples of the coming of the European among them? The Portuguese, the Dutch, the French, and the English, all came, one after another, first seeking gain, then seeking power. Wherever they could get a foothold, they opened trading stations. What did they offer for sale? At the front of all they offered liquors. These were pressed upon the people by all the arts known to the unscrupulous trader eager for riches. Thus fires were lighted that spread and devoured all up and down the land. I have spoken of the effects of the introduction of liquor into Africa by European traders. Much the same effects followed in India, except that the Indian peoples, being superior in civilization and having more help from their religions, were able to make a stronger resistance. The battle would not have been so disastrous to India if it could have remained a battle with the trader only. But at last it became a battle between the Indian people on the one side, and on the other the trader *plus the supreme civil and military power of the government.* Against such a combination of course the people of India could not stand.

RELATION OF THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT TO THE LIQUOR AND OPIUM TRAFFIC.

The story of the complicity of the Indian government (and, indirectly, therefore, that of the government of Great Britain) in the liquor trade of India is a dark one. Little by little India was conquered by the English, and at last was made a dependency of the British crown. It would seem as if from that time on the Indian people might have found help in their battle. Would not a civilized and Christian government lend them a helping hand to keep India sober? Alas! the cruelty of greed for gold and lust for power! The so-called Christian government of India

allied itself, not with the people, but with the liquor trader. Nay, worse, it allied the liquor trader with it, itself inaugurating and systematically carrying out a government policy to press liquor upon all classes in all parts of the land, by every means in its power, and thus bring into its treasury as large a revenue as possible without reference to the evil consequences that might be entailed upon the people. The people protested, remonstrated, sent petitions to the Indian government, sent petitions to the imperial government in England; but the result was the same that I described in connection with Africa. No redress has been obtained. India still remains a land whose government extorts from the people as large a revenue as it can from the manufacture and sale of liquor, and not liquor only, but also from the production and sale of that other intoxicant, whose effects are even worse, if possible, than those of liquor; namely, opium. The opium business in India has been built up by the government from the bottom. The government produces all the opium, as well as gets all the revenue from it. And government agents all over India are given to understand that the question of whether they have been successful or not in selling large quantities of opium and liquor will be taken into account as having a bearing upon their retention and promotion in government service. It is difficult to conceive of anything more inhuman; and yet this thing goes right on, and the people of India are helpless.

In 1870 Keshub Chunder Sen, the distinguished Hindu reformer, said in St. James's Hall, London, "The British government ought to take measures at once to obliterate the disgrace that has been cast upon it, and to abolish that iniquitous opium traffic which kills thousands of the poor Chinese people [now Indian people also], and that demoralizing liquor traffic which is fast devouring the souls and bodies of my countrymen." The British government has taken no such reformatory measures. On the contrary, it has allowed the government of India to force the opium

trade upon India as well as China, and to develop still further the liquor traffic in India, making it more extensive, remunerative, and secure than ever before. Seldom in my life have I heard such sad, such pitiful, such heart-breaking tales as were told me in India of the ravages that are being produced in all parts of that great land both by opium and by strong drink. Again and again I was asked: "Does England know? Will she not come to our rescue? Do the Christian nations generally know? Cannot America do something to create a sentiment in Christendom in our behalf, that may influence our rulers?" What could I answer? Probably the quarter to which there is most reason to look with hope is England. England has a responsibility for India that no other nation has. It is impossible to believe that the majority of Englishmen would be indifferent if they really understood. In the name of humanity, is it not time for such an awakening of temperance sentiment in England and such a quickening of the public conscience as shall open the eyes of the English people to the great and cruel wrong that is being inflicted upon the people of India in connection with the liquor traffic, and set on foot measures for the correction of that wrong?

RELATION OF THE DRINK TRAFFIC TO CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.

There is another aspect of the temperance question in India that demands more attention than it has yet received. It is its bearing upon Christian missions and the introduction of Christianity. America is sending more missionaries to India than to any other single country. Nearly all the European nations have missionaries there. How is their work affected by the introduction of liquor and the intemperance that follows? Liquor is a foe to religion everywhere. But liquor in India is an importation from Christian lands. It comes side by side with Christianity, and it is peculiarly the beverage of Christian peoples. This tends to

identify it, in the Indian mind, with Christianity, and Chri
tianity with it. Who are these English in India that ever
where use liquors, set the fashion of their use in society, an
thus do so much to corrupt the habits of the people? The
are Christians. Who were the traders that first brough
liquor into the land? They came from Christian countrie
and were presumably Christians. What is the governmen
that has allied itself with this curse, and fastened it upo
the Indian people? It calls itself Christian. Can we won
der, then, that the Indian people associate Christianity wit
drink, and speak of liquors as "Christian liquors," and sa
of a man who begins to drink (as I was told it is commo
for them to say) that he is becoming a Christian? And ca
we wonder that Christianity, thus weighted and degraded
makes slow progress in India? It came to me throug
many and seemingly reliable sources while in India, a
being the declaration of the Bishop of Bombay, that fo
every convert made to Christianity in India by the Christia
gospel one hundred drunkards have been made by Christia
liquor. Another distinguished ecclesiastic, after an experi
ence of thirty years in India, has estimated the number o
drunkards to each Christian convert as higher still. Judg
ing from my own inquiries, few persons in India seem dis
posed to put the number lower. But, even if we cut it dow
by one-half or even three-fourths, what a shocking conditio
of things we still have,—fifty or even twenty-five drunkard
to one convert! How long will it take to make Indi
Christian at that rate?

BIBLES AND BRANDY.

Does India need Christianity? I found in India not only
native Hindus and Mohammedans, but Englishmen, who
said, No. Whether she needs Christianity or not, evidently
depends upon the kind of Christianity. Nothing is more cer-
tain than that she does not need a Christianity that intoxicates
and degrades her people, or that robs them of their liberty

ınd their power that it may rob them of their money and heir manhood. She does not need a Christianity that :omes to her with a Bible in one hand and a bayonet in the)ther, or with a Bible in one hand and a bottle in the other. s it said, The missionaries do not represent such a religion .s that? Happily, they do not. But, unhappily, the governnent does; and most of the so-called Christians of India vho are in place and power do. And do we realize how ittle it signifies that a handful of obscure and uninfluential nissionaries, scattered here and there, represent something)etter, if *this* is the kind of Christianity represented by the ich English and German and French and American merhants and traders in the great cities, and, above all, by the 50,000 Englishmen, civil and military, who rule the land? Jo, it does not avail for the missionaries to carry Bibles nly, if those who are a hundred times more powerful and ıfluential carry Bibles and bayonets, and have on their reakfast tables Bibles and brandy. The governor-general's quor banquets are seen from all over India. The missionry's humble cup of tea is visible, at farthest, only from his eighbor's door-yard.

Will India ever accept Christianity? Again, the evident nswer is, It depends upon what kind of Christianity is ffered her. She will have to be a good deal more debased y the vices of Christian civilization than she has become et before she will accept a Christianity that sends to her ıores missionaries and rum in the same ship,—a kind of ıing which Christian England and Christian Germany and hristian Holland and Christian America have all done uch of in the past; and, alas! they have not much mended eir ways in the present. But try India with a real Chrisanity. Try her with a Christianity like that taught by him the Golden Rule and the parable of the Good Samaritan. ry her with a Christianity which means brotherhood, jus:e, consideration for the rights of all men, including the eak and the defenceless and the "heathen." Try her with Christianity which will lift up, and not crush down; which

seeks to give, and not to get; which will purify, and not d bauch; which puts away from itself whatsoever degrad brutalizes, or intoxicates; which says not only, "I will n thrust liquor and opium upon my brother against his wil but, also, "If liquor make my brother to offend, I will n self drink no liquor so long as the world stands." O, gre Christendom, try India and try the world with such a Chr tianity as that, and see whether it will not be accepted.

NEED FOR A TEMPERANCE CHRISTIANITY.

But Christendom is not ready yet to send to India such religion as she needs. We must first get such a Christiani ourselves. Does it not follow that for the next fifty or hundred years the leading foreign-mission work of Christe dom should be temperance work? and that the most impo tant place to carry it on is not in India or China or any s called heathen land, but in Great Britain and on the con nent of Europe and in America?

An important part of the mission upon which I was se to India was to confer with leading Hindu gentlemen various parts of the country as to how friends of India England can best help the Indian people. It was pathet to note how often the answer came: Help us in this matt of temperance. Send us missionaries to help us in ter perance work here in India. But, above all, do what li within your power to create in England a temperance sent ment and a temperance conscience, which will not allo rulers to be sent to us who will debauch our people by the drinking habits, and fasten the curse of liquor and opiu upon us and our children by their wicked enactments.

THE MOST VITAL INTERESTS OF THE WORLD INVOLVED.

It is not strange that I came back from my year of trave in other lands, and of study of the forces that are at work t bless or to blight those lands, feeling as never before th

mportance, the dignity, and the greatness of the temperance
:ause; feeling, too, as never before, that it is a world-cause,
— that its interests are world-interests, its dangers world-
langers, its responsibilities world-responsibilities; that na-
ions, as well as men, are and must be "their brothers'
:eepers"; that no people or land can rise without all others
)eing lifted up, or fall without dragging the rest down; that
he rum which Holland and America send to Africa brutal-
zes America and Holland as well as the Dark Continent;
hat the beer and whiskey which Germany and Scotland
hip to India degrade Scotland and Germany as well as
ndia; and that, if "no *man* liveth to himself or dieth to
imself," it is equally true that no *nation* or *people* or *land*
veth or dieth to itself. Men talk about temperance being
secondary matter. I beg leave to ask, Secondary to what?
econdary to what in our own land, or in any land in the
'orld? If it be not a prime matter in humanity's life, then
know not what is.

The old Scandinavian mythology had its Midgard Serpent,
hich was thrown by Thor into the sea; and it grew so
reat that it circled the earth. Is our modern civilization
eveloping a Midgard Serpent, whose monstrous coils are
) go on fastening themselves around nation after nation
nd people after people, until the world shall be in its power?
his is a question that is rising in many thoughtful minds
)-day. To believe that such a fate awaits humanity would
ake life unendurable. For one, I do not believe it. I do
)t, because I believe in God, and in the radical soundness
: human nature; and, therefore, I believe that our modern
vilization will yet develop forces that will slay the serpent
nd rescue the nations. But to achieve such a result will
:quire a moral conflict as strenuous as the world has ever
:en. It is time that good men in all lands were uniting for
ie struggle.

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